Labor Market Policy Seminar

Labor market trends, job search, and institutions

Prof. Dr. Melanie Arntz, Prof. Dr. Gesine Stephan

Winter term 2025/26

The seminar is aimed at students of the Master in Economics and the Master in Labor Market and Human Resources (Arbeitsmarkt und Personal). For the seminar, students write a paper focusing on recent empirical studies related to labor market trends, job search, and labor market institutions. The aim is to present these studies – which often use experimental or quasi-experimental designs – in the context of the broader literature and to critically discuss methods and policy implications. Students may also suggest other topics or conduct an own empirical analysis.

Course work includes a seminar paper, a 25-minute presentation of the paper, and class participation in the form of a discussion of a fellow student's paper that introduces the group discussion.

Introductory meeting:	Friday, 31.10.2025, 16:00 - 17:30, Zoom
Seminar presentations:	Friday, 6.2.2026, 9:00 - 18:00, LG 5.152
	Saturday, 7.2.2026, 9:00 - 18:00, LG 5.152

If you are interested in participating, please contact the supervisor (melanie.arntz@iab.de or gesine.stephan@iab.de) no later than **October 20** and include your name, matriculation number, and topic preferences.

Ten possible topics are listed on the next page; you may also suggest another topic or your own empirical analysis. Please check the literature before deciding on a topic; the articles suggested vary in difficulty and length. Topics will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants can begin their work as soon as they have reserved a topic.

Please make an early appointment with the course instructor responsible for the chosen topic to discuss your proposed outline of the paper. You must submit the paper (approximately 15 pages) via email to your supervisor by **December 22, 2025**. You will be assigned a fellow student's paper for discussion by December 23. Attendance at all seminar presentations is mandatory.

Potential topics and starting literature

General reference:

Le Barbanchon, T., Schmieder, J., & Weber, A. (2024). Job search, unemployment insurance, and active labor market policies. In Handbook of Labor Economics (Vol. 5, pp. 435-580). Elsevier.

Cluster A: Job Search, Matching, and Information in the Labour Market

1. Job search behavior (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Fluchtmann, J., Glenny, A. M., Harmon, N., & Maibom, J. (2024). Unemployed job search across people and over time: Evidence from applied-for jobs. Journal of Labor Economics, 42(4), 1175-1217.

Marinescu, I., & Skandalis, D. (2021). Unemployment insurance and job search behavior. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 136(2), 887-931.

2. Wages and applications (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Belot, M., Kircher, P., & Muller, P. (2022). How wage announcements affect job search—a field experiment. American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics, 14(4), 1-67.

He, H., Neumark, D., & Weng, Q. (2023). 'I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For': Evidence of Directed Search from a Field Experiment. The Economic Journal, 133(649), 258-280.

3. Recommender systems (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Behaghel, L., Dromundo, S., Gurgand, M., Hazard, Y., & Zuber, T. (2024). The potential of recommender systems for directing job search: A large scale experiment. IZA Discussion Paper 16781

Le Barbanchon, T., Hensvik, L., & Rathelot, R. (2023). How can AI improve search and matching? Evidence from 59 million personalized job recommendations, mimeo.

4. Online job search assistance (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Briscese, G., Zanella, G., & Quinn, V. (2022). Providing government assistance online: A field experiment with the unemployed. Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 41(2), 579-602.

Dhia, A. B., Crépon, B., Mbih, E., Paul-Delvaux, L., Picard, B., & Pons, V. (2022). Can a website bring unemployment down? Experimental evidence from France. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper w29914.

5. The role of information (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Kostøl, A. R., & Myhre, A. S. (2021). Labor supply responses to learning the tax and benefit schedule. **American Economic Review**, 111(11), 3733-3766.

Cairo, S., & Mahlstedt, R. (2023). The disparate effects of information provision: A field experiment on the work incentives of social welfare. **Journal of Public Economics**, 226, 104987.

Cluster B: Design and Evaluation of Labour Market Policies

6. Front-loading unemployment benefits (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Lindner, A., & Reizer, B. (2020). Front-loading the unemployment benefit: An empirical assessment. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 12(3), 140-174.

DellaVigna, S., Lindner, A., Reizer, B., & Schmieder, J. F. (2017). Reference-dependent job search: Evidence from Hungary. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132(4), 1969-2018.

7. Short-time work (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Brinkmann, C., Jäger, S., Kuhn, M., Saidi, F., & Wolter, S. (2024). Short-time work extensions. National Bureau of Economic Research Discussion Paper 19653

Kagerl, C. (2024). The employment and windfall effects of short-time work: Evidence from Germany. IAB-Discussion Paper 14/2024.

8. Evaluation of active labor market programs using causal machine learning (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Prerequisite: Strong interest in econometrics and machine learning

Mascolo, F., Bearth, N., Muny, F., Lechner, M., & Mareckova, J. (2024). From Average Effects to Targeted Assignment: A Causal Machine Learning Analysis of Swiss Active Labor Market Policies. arXiv preprint arXiv:2410.23322.

Goller, D., Lechner, M., Pongratz, T., & Wolff, J. (2025). Active labor market policies for the long-term unemployed: New evidence from causal machine learning. Labour Economics, 102729.

9. Active labour market policies for the youth (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Hall, C., Kotakorpi, K., Liljeberg, L., & Pirttilä, J. (2022). Screening through activation? Differential effects of a youth activation program. **Journal of Human Resources**, 57(3), 1033-1077.

Albanese, A., Cockx, B., & Dejemeppe, M. (2024). Long-term effects of hiring subsidies for low-educated unemployed youths. **Journal of Public Economics**, 235, 105137.

10. Active Labour Market Policies – an overall assessment (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Card, D., Kluve, J., & Weber, A. (2018). What works? A meta analysis of recent active labor market program evaluations. **Journal of the European Economic Association**, 16(3), 894-931.

Vooren, M., Haelermans, C., Groot, W., & Maassen van den Brink, H. (2019). The effectiveness of active labor market policies: a meta-analysis. **Journal of Economic Surveys**, 33(1), 125-149.

Cluster C: Inclusion and Activation of Specific Groups

11. Refugee benefit cuts (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Dustmann, C., Landersø, R., & Andersen, L. H. (2024). Refugee benefit cuts. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 16(2), 406-441.

Arendt, J. N. (2024). Welfare benefit generosity and Refugee Integration. International Migration Review, 58(2), 706-733.

12. Integrating Refugees (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Kasrin, Z., & Tübbicke, S. (2024). Which active labor market policies work for male refugees? Evidence from Germany. **Journal of Social Policy**, 53(3), 727-750.

Foged, M., Hasager, L., & Peri, G. (2024). Comparing the effects of policies for the labor market integration of refugees. **Journal of Labor Economics**, 42(S1), S335-S377.

13. Recognition of foreign qualifications (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Brücker, H., Glitz, A., Lerche, A., & Romiti, A. (2021). Occupational recognition and immigrant labor market outcomes. **Journal of Labor Economics**, 39(2), 497-525.

Anger, S., Bassetto, J., & Sandner, M. (2022). Making integration work? Facilitating access to occupational recognition and immigrants labor market performance (No. 11/2022). IAB-Discussion Paper.

14. Activating older workers (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Boockmann, B., Zwick, T., Ammermüller, A., & Maier, M. (2012). Do hiring subsidies reduce unemployment among older workers? Evidence from natural experiments. **Journal of the European Economic Association**, 10(4), 735-764.

Laun, L. (2017). The effect of age-targeted tax credits on labor force participation of older workers. **Journal of Public Economics**, 152, 102-118.

Cluster D: Gender Gaps and Labour Market Inequality

15. Gender and applications (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Fluchtmann, J., Glenny, A. M., Harmon, N. A., & Maibom, J. (2024). The Gender Application Gap: Do men and women apply for the same jobs?. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 16(2), 182-219.

Coffman, K. B., Collis, M. R., & Kulkarni, L. (2024). Whether to apply (*older version here*). Management Science, 70(7), 4649-4669.

16. Gender and leadership (supervisor: Gesine Stephan)

Haegele, I. (2024). The broken rung: Gender and the leadership gap. arXiv preprint arXiv:2404.07750.

Eckel, C., Gangadharan, L., Grossman, P. J., & Xue, N. (2021). The gender leadership gap: Insights from experiments. In A research agenda for experimental economics, in: Chaudhuri, A. (ed.), A research agenda for experimental research, Chapter 7, 137-162, Edward Elgar Publishing.

17. Promoting gender equality (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Baker, M., Halberstam, Y., Kroft, K., Mas, A., & Messacar, D. (2023). Pay transparency and the gender gap. **American Economic Journal: Applied Economics**, 15(2), 157-183.

Bertrand, M., Black, S. E., Jensen, S., & Lleras-Muney, A. (2019). Breaking the glass ceiling? The effect of board quotas on female labour market outcomes in Norway. The Review of Economic Studies, 86(1), 191-239.

Cluster E: Human Capital Investment and Early Interventions

18. Early career guidance and mentoring (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Renée, L. (2025). The Long-Term Effects of Career Guidance in High School and Student Financial Aid: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment. **American Economic Journal: Applied Economics**, 17(2), 165-183.

Resnjanskij, S., Ruhose, J., Wiederhold, S., Woessmann, L., & Wedel, K. (2024). Can mentoring alleviate family disadvantage in adolescence? A field experiment to improve labor market prospects. **Journal of Political Economy**, 132(3), 1013-1062.

19. Educational Choices (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Steiner, V., & Wrohlich, K. (2012). Financial student aid and enrollment in higher education: New evidence from Germany. **The Scandinavian Journal of Economics**, 114(1), 124-147.

Thomsen, S. L., & Trunzer, J. (2024). Did the Bologna Process challenge the German apprenticeship system? Evidence from a natural experiment. **Journal of Human Capital**, 18(4), 635-667.

20. Training participation of low-skilled workers (supervisor: Melanie Arntz)

Fouarge, D., Schils, T., & De Grip, A. (2013). Why do low-educated workers invest less in further training?. **Applied Economics**, 45(18), 2587-2601.

Hidalgo, D., Oosterbeek, H., & Webbink, D. (2014). The impact of training vouchers on low-skilled workers. **Labour Economics**, 31, 117-128.

Some instructions

Term paper

- Typical outline (to be adapted to your specific topic): Introduction, theoretical considerations, empirical evidence, conclusions, and discussion.

- Clarify: Why is the topic important/interesting, what are the contributions of the presented studies to the literature, what needs to be criticized, where are there still research gaps?

- Literature: You are expected to research and utilize additional literature.

- Format: Approximately 15 pages (+/-2 pages) + cover page + references, 11-point Times New Roman font, 1 ½ line spacing, 3 cm margins top/bottom/side, no list of figures/tables/abbreviations required.

- Citations: In text (not in footnotes), e.g. Arni (2015), Arni and Schiprowski (2015), Arni et al. (2015) if more than three authors....

Important

- Cite correctly! Always cite the source of your arguments (and at the beginning of a paragraph, not at the end if the entire paragraph refers to a specific paper). All direct quotations must be indicated by quotation marks. Use direct quotations only if the exact wording is relevant for your discussion, otherwise use indirect quotations only.

- Do not write down anything you did not understand in the original literature. When in doubt, talk to the instructor and ask about the critical points.

- The use of AI tools is only permitted for those steps in the preparation of a seminar paper that does not involve writing the text itself. These include spell-checking and grammar corrections, conducting literature research, generating ideas for structuring the paper, or generating ideas for discussing a concept used in the paper. But always double-check content as AI tools may hallucinate. Always stay in charge of writing the paper. In case of using AI tools, add a disclaimer, which application you used for which tasks.

Discussion of a fellow student's thesis paper

- Aims to provide a starting point for discussion of a thesis paper; typically done in the form of a short slide presentation

- Typical outline: Brief summary (1 slide), general assessment (1 slide), specific points (was something wrong or missing, could you add further research to the discussion?)

Some online tips if this is your first term paper:

- Why reliable information is important https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIgdoj58jKc
- Search for scientific information
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5-cLw5EAU8
- Evaluate the quality of information https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UwHgXE9h70
- Cite correctly
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GTt75a3KFI
- Access scientific information for free
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtgCAWFKpJw